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NOTES

IN REGARD TO SOME

TEXTILE PLANTS OF BRAZIL,

AT

THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

AT PHILADELPHIA IN 1876,

BY

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THE TEXTILE PLANTS OF BRAZIL

AT THE

UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION IN PHILADELPHIA.

It is to be lamented that Brazil did not send a complete selection of her textile plants, it is proper however to remark, that a good number of the most important species are well represented in the Agricultural Hall, and are held in high esteem by competent judges. But the beautiful filaments of the *Musas* or Banana trees, and those of *Ananassa sativa*, which was included by us in the great Expositions of Vienna and Paris, are unfortunately wanting here. We have now, however, quantities of other textile material, which we will immediately proceed to notice:

HEMP—(*Canabis sativa.*)—A European plant which has been acclimated in Brazil, where it is used for

1st experiment,	-	-	-	10	grammes.
2nd	"	-	-	-	15	"
3rd	"	-	-	-	14	"
4th	"	-	-	-	18	"
5th	"	-	-	-	19	"
Average,	-	-	-	-	15	"

The Pindayba (*Xylopia sericea*), which, in the language of the native Indians, means the kook-wood, contains, in its cortical layers, ribbon-like strips, similar to those of the Embria (X. frutescens), both of which are used by the natives to tie their fences, or at best, for coarse ropes to tie their cattle.

All of these varieties of the textile elements contrast with the dark color of the false parasite, known among us by the name of Barba de velho or *Tillandsia usneoides* in botanical phraseology. From the branches of this tree fall flexible twigs of this *epiphyta*, which the country people gather up to fill mattresses, pillows, cushions, and to pack porcelain and glass.

They are principally adapted to the mattress-maker's purpose, and these white downs, as well as some other yellow ones, extracted from the fruit of *Bombaceas*, are remarkably light, and excellent materials for winter mattresses and pillows. We have products of this nature from the *Chorisia speciosa* of Rio de Janeiro and from the celebrated Samahuma of the Amazon, or *Eriodendron*, which botanist consider the largest tree in the world.

To complete this epitomized report, we will point to the three novelties in textile substances, each of which is very interesting. In the first place, the

natural paper from the tree *Lasiandra papyrus* from the Serra Dourada, in the province of Goyaz, due perhaps to successive exfoliations of the epidermis; in the second place, the seeds of an *Ichites*, from the province of Paranà, adorned with flocks of vegetable silk, similar to the *Tafetone* of Africa, intended for felt for hats; finally, the vegetable wool from the province of Alagoas, or felt taken from the interior of a small fruit (*Malvacca?*), of weak consistency, but of a quite original appearance, from one to two centimetres in length. (*)

In the Main Building visitors will observe the long *spathas* of the palm *Manicaria saccifera*, transformed into beautiful hats, and the filaments of the *Mosnordica operculata*, into baskets, hats, and other articles of delicate handiwork.

Philadelphia, May 18th, 1876.

DR. JOSÉ DE SALDANHA DA GAMA.

(*) My investigations of the beautiful fibres of Mr. Severino da Costa Leite are mentioned in the report published by my fellow-member, Dr. Nicoláo Moreira.